

THE ROLE OF THE PRIEST IN SUNUWAR SOCIETY

A. Fournier

Paris

“L’homme en présence de la nature y sent confusément une multitude infinie de forces prêtes à s’exercer aux dépens de sa faiblesse; son panthéon, toujours ouvert, a toujours place pour de nouveaux hôtes. Le prêtre n’est pas un médecin d’âmes, c’est un spécialiste de rites; comme le dieu qu’il sert, il a son ressort de compétence où il excelle, et laisse volontiers le champ libre aux voisins” (Lévi, 1905, “Le Népal” vol. I: 317).

On reading works on Himalayan ethnic groups, especially passages pertaining to the religious aspects of their society, one is struck by the dichotomy often existing in the roles of the religious officiants: on the one hand he is a medium, a magician or a shaman; on the other: a diviner, a priest or a sacrificer. Among the Sunuwar, a small Bodic ethnic group living in eastern Nepal, located mainly between the banks of the rivers Khimti khola and Maulung khola, one comes across both these types of officiants: the *Puimbo* (a male shaman) or the *Ngiami* (a female shaman) and the *Naso* (a priest). In this paper, I should like to discuss in particular the role of the latter.¹

In Sunuwar society, particularly on the Likhu khola, a *Naso* is a man of importance as a man of knowledge and a conductor of rituals who knows the propitiatory

1. The field work on which this paper is based was carried out between August 1969 and February 1970 with the support of the R. C. P. (Recherches Coopératives sur Programme) 65 (C. N. R. S.) for which Mr C. Jest whom I would like to thank here, was then responsible.

Sabra is a Sunuwar village on the western bank of the Likhu khola, where most of my research took place. I would like to profit from this occasion to thank all the inhabitants of this village for their patience and kindness.

The Sunuwar who are a Sino-Tibetan tribe, belonging to the Bodic group (Shafer, 1953), number about 15.000-20.000 inhabitants in Nepal, and around 3.500 in India, Sikkim or Bhutan. The bibliography in English on the Sunuwar is rather scanty; they are occasionally mentioned in administrative reports or in hand-books for the Indian army (see Bista 1972: 200-203). In Nepali however, there is a little booklet written by a Sunuwar (cf. Sunuwār, 1956).

The nepali terms are based on Turner’s method of transcription whereas the sunuwari transcriptions are my own. For further information about Sunuwar language, see Bieri & Schulze, 1971.

formulae (*pidar*) used for invoking the deities of the Sunuwar pantheon and who sacrifices buffaloes, pigs, goats or chickens during public or semi-public ceremonies.² Although possessing the power and the strength (*tung*) of summoning up various divinities, he cannot incarnate them himself without the aid of a medium: a *Puimbo* or a *Ngiami*. A *Naso* never falls into trance.

The position of *Naso* is always hereditary, contrary to that of *Puimbo* or *Ngiami*. A *Naso* must choose his successor from among his male offspring; his choice usually falls on the son or grandson whom he considers to be the most intelligent and most able to perform religious functions. During the period of initiation the pupil *Naso* is trained to memorise a great variety of propitiatory formulae or chants by mnemotechnique repetitions. When he is about six or seven years old, the future *Naso* accompanies his father to different rituals in order to familiarise himself with the different sequences which he must re-enact later in private under the guidance of his *guru*. He must also learn by heart all the myths and traditions of his own culture which he gleans from village elders who might know them. If his father dies before he has completed his training, the young pupil finds himself obliged to ask the village community to contribute to the expenses of completing his instruction as the future conductor of village rituals. The *Naso* inherits the sacrificial bow and arrows on the death of his father in return for which he must carry out certain funerary rites.³

The paraphernalia of the *Naso* is very simple. When he is officiating, he wears his ordinary everyday dress in clean, white material ornamented with one or two necklaces of blue and red stones, interspersed with a few seeds of *kolol* (*Sapindus mukerossi* Gaertn.) and *bhirkaulo* (*Coix lacryma Jobi* Linn.). On his head he sports a large white cotton turban (*pheta*) which he has received from the person asking for the ritual. At his right side, he carries a small bag (*dun-tahilo*) decorated with yellow tassels and cowries. When he is officiating at a ceremony, he is seated on a musk-deer skin or on a blanket if there is one available or otherwise on a paddy mat (*gundri*). In front of him is placed a red copper vessel (*tamar*) containing a branch of *hope* (*Thysa nalaena agrestis*) which is used as a holy-water sprinkler, and an earthen censer (*dhupauro*) containing burning ashes and juniper resin. To his right arm placed two knives: a small one (*lalukarda*) for sacrificing pigs, and a *khukuri* (*lalutsub*) for goats and chickens.

2. When I employ the term *Naso* in this article I invariably refer to the *Duma Naso*. There are however, three other types of *Naso*, whose functions differ from those of the former and whose period of initiation is much shorter: the *Sher-pa Naso* is always a brother of the *Duma Naso*, and can officiate in his stead during certain curative or preventive sacrifices, e.g. the *Kālīka pujā* or *Bhimsen Pujā*; the *Dhupe Naso* is usually a son of the *Sher-pa*, and as his name indicates, his duty is to recite *pidar* accompanied by the burning of juniper; the *Shipe Naso* is often an assistant and this office is frequently assigned to the youngest brother of the *Sher-pa* or the *Dhupe*. A *Shipe Naso* can subsequently become a *Sher-pa* or *Dhupe Naso* if he wishes.

3. This was the case, for example, of Guru *Naso* at Sabra who, orphaned at an early age, was brought up by his grandfather who was himself a *Duma Naso*. When he was 9 years old, his grandfather died and it was his duty to recite the mortuary invocations on his grave. Then Guru *Naso* inherited the bow and arrows of his grandfather, certain of which had been the property of his *Naso* ancestors.

During the *Caṇḍi* festival which takes place every year in *Baisāk-purne* (the night of the full moon in mid-April to mid-May) the *Naso* holds a large drum (*ḍhol*) which he only beats prior to the sacrifice and then, using his bow and arrow, he shoots through the heart of the buffalo or the pig.

The *Naso* must know how to conduct a variety of rituals which can be subdivided into four categories:

- (1) public rituals: *Caṇḍi*; *Ghil*; *Naesa*; *Khas*..
- (2) seasonal rituals: sowing (*jojor washi*); harvest (*nogi*)..
- (3) private and domestic rituals: births; name giving; weddings; funerals; ancestor worship..
- (4) curative and preventive rituals for human beings and domestic animals: *Kalika pūjā*; *Messalmi pūjā*; *Saguni*; *Bhimsen*; *Antim*; *Aitābāre*; etc.

During *Caṇḍi*, a Sunuwar village festival which occurs every year on both banks of the *Likhu khola*, the *Naso* dances in front of the buffalo and pigs before sacrificing them. In general buffaloes are sacrificed on the west side of the river and pigs to the east. (It is interesting that the river seems to be a sacrificial borderline in eastern Nepal between the buffaloes and pigs). *Ghil*, *Naesa* and *Khas* are lineage rituals which are celebrated every 20 to 25 years, one by each generation, in the lineage house. On this occasion, pigs, goats and chickens are offered to the ancestral spirits. The seasonal rituals are also performed in the lineage house. Domestic and private rituals as well as curative and preventive ceremonies take place in rich, orthodox, Sunuwar houses during the day-time. Nowadays, however, Sunuwars ask the services of a brahmin.

After this brief description of the role of the *Naso*, we must now examine that of the *Puimbo* or the *Ngiami* in order to highlight the essential difference between them.

THE PUIMBO AND THE NGIAMI

As already mentioned, the position of the *Puimbo* or *Ngiami* is never hereditary, although the cases of shamans who do not belong to a specific lineage are rare. The vocation of the *Puimbo* or *Ngiami* becomes evident at a very early age. A girl or a boy while herding cattle in the jungle will suddenly become possessed by a dwarf jungle spirit (*banjhākri*).⁴ In their home, generally a grotto, these "wild spirits" impart to the future *Puimbo* or *Ngiami* the rudiments of their religious training: *mantra* (formulae), and how to make a shamanist drum (*dhyāñro*).

4 For a more detailed description of the initiation and role of the *Puimbo* or the *Ngiami* see my article: "Note préliminaire sur le *Puimbo* et la *Ngiami*, les chamanes Sunuwar de Sabra". *Asie du Sud-Est et Monde Insulinien* IV (1): 147-167.

Whereas in general the *Naso* operates and sacrifices during the day-time, the *Puimbo* or *Ngiami* prefer to perform their rites by night. When exercising his religious duties, the *Puimbo* wears a kind of long female garment (*jāmā*) and a turban in which he has inserted porcupine needles. The *Puimbo* or *Ngiami* must banish the wandering souls of those who have died a violent death (such as suicide; child-birth; accidents and diseases) or exorcise ghost and evil spirits from the living. When he is operating indoors, the *Naso* is seated in the private quarters of the house near the main pillar, the *Puimbo* or *Ngiami* is seated and operates in that part of the house open to friends or visitors. When both operate together, the *Naso* sits on the right carrying his sacrificial *lalutsub*, and the *Puimbo* or *Ngiami* on the left, carrying his wooden magical knife (*phur-bu*). During public or semi-public rituals, the *Naso* needs the help of the *Puimbo* or *Ngiami* whose only role is to bring down to the sanctuary the gods or spirits for whom the sacrifice is carried out, and then, when the religious ceremony is over, to order them to return to the supernatural world. Whereas the *Naso* can only operate within the Sunuwar community, a *Puimbo* or a *Ngiami*, however, can act as intercessor between evil spirits and people belonging to different ethnic groups or castes. After death, the *Naso* is buried standing up, his *ḍhol* being placed on his grave; while the *Puimbo* or the *Ngiami* is inhumed in a sitting position with his *dhyāñro* on the grave, although Sunuwars are now cremated in accordance with Hindu custom.⁵

If one summarises the respective roles of the *Naso* and *Puimbo* in a dual system of symbolic classification (Table 1), one can see the opposition between both in pairs of opposite but complementary terms:

TABLE 1.

<i>N A S O</i>	<i>P U I M B O / N G I A M I</i>
male	male or female
hereditary	non-hereditary
right	left
sacrifice	trance
day-time	night-time
ordinary male dress	specific female dress
life-cycle	death-cycle
living	spirits
normal death	abnormal death

5. It is only since 1947-48, that the Sunuwars have cremated their dead. The erstwhile cemetery is still to be found south of Khaping (a settlement), in a rocky escarpment. People are fearful of passing by there, and when obliged to do so, they hurry their pace, the women hiding their faces with a scarf and the men bowing their heads.

gods, ancestral spirits	ghosts, evil spirits
auspicious	inauspicious
private part of the house	public part of the house
public or semi-public rituals	private rituals
training inside the village	training inside the jungle
Sunuwars	multi-ethnic
sacred	profane
<i>ḍhol; lahutsub</i>	<i>ḍyhāṅro; phur-bu</i>
buried standing up	buried sitting up

Having established the dual nature of religious functions among the Sunuwar, interesting comparisons can be made with those of other Himalayan ethnic groups.

HIMALAYAN PARALLELS

Among the Pahari-speaking people who claim to be Hindus, the priest or sacrificer and the psychopomp play more or less parallel roles to those of the *Naso* and *Puimbo*. In eastern and central Nepal among castes a *Pujāri* and a *Jhākri* accomplish these functions. A *Pujāri* is "someone who is regularly paid for performing a rite in a temple and for looking after the temple" (Śarma 2011: 660); and a *Jhākri* is "a healer who cures the sick by making known (the will of) the divinities (*devata*) or the ghosts (*pret*) whom he causes to enter his own body by means of prayers-incantations (*mantra-tantra*)" (ibid.: 401). In western Nepal among the castes, a particular kind of *Jhākri* is to be found, known as the *Dhāmi*. A *Dhāmi* is "a person who expels such obstructions as evil spirits (*bhut*); ghosts (*Pret*); witches (*boksi*) etc. by making them enter his own body by means of prayers-incantations (*mantra-tantra*)" (ibid.: 541). The *Dhāmi* however, contrary to the *Jhākri* never uses a magic drum (*ḍhyāṅro*) but demands the services of a musician-tailor (*Damāi*) (Gaborieau 1969: 30-34). The same dichotomy can be observed outside of Nepal, in Garhwal, for example where one finds the *Pujāri* and the shaman (*Bāki*). In this area, however, the *pujāri* is the caretaker of the temple who, when performing rites, speaks to the deity by chanting prayers and incantations and on rare occasions beheads a goat which is then offered to the *devata*; and the *Bāki* is "primarily a diagnostician who is able to call upon his personal god at will, become possessed by him, and then diagnose the difficulties of his client through the wisdom of the god" (Berreman 1963: 90 and elsewhere) ⁶.

6. For more details concerning the *Jhākri* of Nepal see the articles of Macdonald (1962, 1966, 1968), particularly Macdonald 1962: 108 where a definition of a *jhākri* is given. For an account of the *Dhāmi* as oracles see Pignède 1966; Gaborieau 1969 or Bista 1971: 158. In the same work, Bista gives an extremely enlightening account of the *Pujāri* (ibid. 139-152). In this paper the Tibetan-speaking oracles are not mentioned: for further information see: Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956.

Among the Bodic-speaking people, a similar duality of functions is to be noted among religious officiants. In West and Central Nepal one finds among Magars the *Pujāri*, a “young unmarried boy” and the shaman (*Jhākri*) (Hitchcock 1966: 27-31; 1967: 157) or among Gurungs, the *Klihbri* and the *Pucu* (Pignède 1966: 293-298); and among Western Tamangs, the *Lambu* and the *Bombo* (Höfer 1969: 26-27). In Eastern Nepal also the Rais have the *Nokchhoe*, “the religious leader” and the *Ngopa* who “is possessed by spirits and announces the verdict of gods” (Bista 1972: 40-42); and the Limbus have the *Phedañma* and the *Yābā* or *Yumā* (Sagant 1969: 115). In a recent article Sagant discusses the opposite yet complementary roles of the *Phedañma* and of the *Bijuwā* (a kind of shaman, synonymous with *Yābā* and *Yumā*)⁷. The *Phedañma* is always a male officiant who wears everyday dress. He performs all the auspicious rituals in his village. The *Bijuwā* on the contrary, can be male or female and is dressed in a long female garment. He is hired to carry out all the rites performed for inauspicious events, especially death by violence. Like the Sunuwar *Naso*, the *Phedañma* can operate indoors in the private quarters reserved for the household only; on the other hand the *Bijuwā*, like the *puimbo*, sits in the public part of the house used for entertaining friends or visitors (Sagant 1973: 70-74). Among the Lepchas one finds the *Padem*, “a hereditary masculine priest” and the *Mun* who is a male or female shaman (Siiger 1956: 83). The *Padem* is “the first step to becoming *Mun*” and therefore has less importance in Lepcha society (Gorer 1967: 215). The *Padem* as well as the *Mun* have the right to offer sacrifice. If one takes a quick glimpse outside of Nepal, one again comes across this dichotomy in the various roles of religious specialists. In Kulu, in the Western Himalayas, among the Kanashis of Malana, for instance, two types of officiant can be distinguished: the *Pujara* “the priest” and the *Gur*, “mouth-piece of god” who “at certain ceremonies goes into a state of possession in which he becomes the vehicle of communication between the god and the villager” (Rosser 1960: 81). With regard to the Bodic-speaking groups in the eastern part

7. There seems to be some confusion concerning the exact role exercised by the Limbu *Phedañma*. According to Caplan (Caplan 1970: 110), a “*Phedañma* discovers his power through dreams or as is more often the case, by becoming possessed”. This opinion was confirmed in private by R. L. Jones. Fr. Hermanns however, like Sagant, notes that “the *phedañma* of the Limbus differs from the others who perform the sacrifice in that he does not tremble;—by this is meant the trembling that comes over them when they are possessed by a spirit” (Hermanns 1954: 12). Maybe there are two types of *Phedañma* whose roles vary from region to region: in Ilam as in Panchthar, the *Phedañma* is possessed; but in Taplejung as in Darjeeling it would appear that he is only a sacrificer who, though capable of going on “ritual journeys”, does not fall into trance.

of the Himalayas, particularly in Arunachal Pradesh, the roles of various officiants are less easily definable due to a lack of precise information. Among the Subansiri Daflas there are three types of religious performers: the *Nijik Nube* who "treats only ordinary diseases and observes omen in the eggs"; the *But Nube* who cures sickness and performs sacrifices; and the *Nyoki Nube* who is a shaman (Shukla 1965: 89-90). Among the Padam Miniong Adis, however, one meets again with the male diviner (*Nyibo*) and the medium (*Miri*) who wears a woman's skirt and who can be of either sex; but "a *Nyibo* performs by day whereas a *Miri* functions only at night" (Roy 1960: 248-251). For Furer-Haimendorf however, a *Mirü* (*Miri*) is able to go into trance and an *Ipak Mirü* is at the same time an exorciser who propitiates and offers sacrifice (Furer-Haimendorf 1954: 592). Similar differences can be observed among the Gallong Adis, except that a *Nyibo* can also be a medium (Dunbar 1913-17: 73; Srivastava 1962: 101-102.) But it is among the far away Tangsa confederacy that one again comes across a distinct opposition in the role of the priest (*Tingwa*) and that of the male or female diviner (*Taiteling* or *Talwa*), though their office is not hereditary (Dutta 1959: 66).

Having made this brief survey, one can conclude that the dual roles of religious specialists in many Himalayan ethnic groups, though of an opposing yet complementary nature, vary widely from tribe to tribe, and that it is virtually impossible to place them into clear-cut categories for convenience sake. There exist the medium, the shaman, the psychopomp who can become priest, the sacrificer or the diviner.

If one refers back to the Sunuwar, one can observe significant changes taking place in their religious practices. The Sunuwar claim that when they emigrated to their present habitat, the country was uninhabited; but with the heavy migration and settlement of Indo-Nepalese castes in this area during the last two hundred years after the conquest of Prithivi Narayan Shah, and more recently with the infiltration of other ethnic groups due to the opening of new mines, the Sunuwar population lost part of their *Kipat* lands which were transformed into *Birta* lands⁸ or were taken under mortgage. Their economic impoverishment probably explains why the Sunuwar have forsaken expensive rituals utilising blood sacrifice, cereals, and large quantities of fermented beer or distilled liquor. Thus among the Surels, the oldest sub-group of Sunuwar, who live on the banks of the Suri khola, the *Nakso* (*Naso*) has practically become "unemployed" as a conductor of rituals and

8. Regmi describes the *Kipat* system: "land is held on a tribal, village, kindred or family basis, and individuals have definite rights in this land by virtue of their membership in the relevant social unit. Hence title to land has a communal character and it is usufructuary, rather than absolute" (Regmi 1965: 82). He also notes that "*Birta* meant an assignment of income by the State in favor of individuals in order to provide them with a livelihood" (Regmi 1964: 2).

his last village sacrifice was performed 20 years ago⁹. The Brahmins, Chetris and Newars plan to collect a little money together in the future to hold one large buffalo sacrifice, because they believe that this will increase the fertility of their land (bought or stolen from the illiterate Surels) even though this sacrificial ritual is a purely Surel one and observed only by them. Furthermore contact with various other castes or ethnic groups in the bazaars (*bajar*), periodic markets (*hāt*) or annual fairs (*melā*)¹⁰ tends to encourage people to abandon their own religious traditions. On both banks of the Khimti khola, the Sunuwars are thus in permanent relation with other ethnic groups as several important routes pass close by their villages¹¹ which are used by many different peoples. The opening of the Jiri market, every Saturday¹², has rendered them more open to outside influence, in particular to Sanskritization¹³. Nowadays they rarely utilize the services of their *Naso* for the performance of life-cycle and seasonal rituals, preferring instead the services of a Brahmin which are less expensive, and considered more up-to-date. They have abandoned their costly village rituals, except in the village of Pharpu where they still celebrate the *Naesa*, a semi-public ritual held every twelve years in a lineage house. If on the Likhu khola, the Sunuwars who are more isolated from outsiders, still require their *Naso* to perform public or semi-public sacrifices, they also are beginning to employ a Brahmin pundit for certain rites such as name-giving, funerals or thanks-giving (*Sat Narayan puḷā*). In the face of this slow but irresistible Sanskritization

9. The Surels, who number about 140 inhabitants, live in Suri, a village on the Suri khola in the Suri-Tinekhu Haleshwar *panchayat*. The Surels speak an archaic Sunuwar dialect. I hope to publish in the near future, notes collected among Surels.

10. The *bajār*, *hāt* or *melā* are similar to those described by Sagant in Taplejung and Terhathum (Sagant 1968: 90-118.)

11. There are several roads traversing the Sunuwar *kipat*; the two most important wind along the tops of mountain ridges running parallel on either side of the Khimti khola; the road west of the river goes from Jiri to Ramechhap or to Chisopani where people go to buy salt: the road on the eastern side goes from the bazar of those to Ramechhap, the chief town of the district. The Sunuwars control 3 important bridges crossing the Khimti khola: in Digi, in Betali and in Rasnal, the latter is just newly built and is rapidly coming more into use. (cf. Schneider 1969: 1-8).

12. Since 1964, the market at Jiri (*hāt*) has become an important trading place. Jiri is on the route between Kathmandu and the eastern part of Nepal, particularly Namche Bajar, at the foot of Everest (Schmid 1969).

13. I am using the definition of Srinivas (1967), cited by Caplan: "Sanskritization is the process by which a low caste or tribe or other group takes over the customs, rituals, belief, ideology and style of life of a high and, in particular, a 'twice-born' caste" (Caplan 1970: 189 n. 2).

among the *Kirat* people¹⁴. the development of nativist movements¹⁵. can be observed, contrary to the views held by Caplan (Caplan 1970: 202). In Khiji, an eastern Likhu khola village, for example, a Sunuwar *Naso* who served in the British army as a Gurkha soldier, is now leader of such a movement. This movement is based on indigenous religious concepts and has a strict moral code, advocating the prohibition of beer, liquor, meat, smoking, gambling, female abduction and fighting. It would seem that these Sunuwar reformists wish to become more orthodox than the orthodox Brahmins. I have heard of similar nativist movements among certain Thulung or Bahing Rai villages: and my friend Rex L. Jones has mentioned in private that he has observed the same type of phenomena springing up among the Limbus. Unlike the *Naso*, the *Puimbo* or *Ngiami* is still very popular and much in demand in the multi-ethnic village of Suri as well as in the Sunuwar area. If one takes a glance at the Jirels, a mixed sub-group of Sunuwars, who live between the rivers Tamba kosi and Khimti khola, a little further North-West than the Sunuwars proper¹⁶, and who are Buddhist, one can see *Lama* used as priests, and *Buimbo* who are at the same time shamans and sacrificers. (It is unthinkable for a Sunuwar *Puimbo* or a *Ngiami* to offer blood sacrifice, as the shedding of blood is considered incompatible with their office as vehicles of communication between men and the spirit world. Parallel cases occur among Himalayan tribes such as the *Bharara*

¹⁴. The *Kirāt* are mentioned in Indian Epic, such as the Mahabharata. According to Nepalese traditions, they occupied the Kathmandu valley (Nepal) before the Licchavi dynasty just prior to and during the early years of the Christian era (Regmi 1969: 54-64). Nowadays, the ethnic groups going by this name live in the eastern part of Nepal: they are the Rais, Limbus and Yakhas. The Sunuwars also claim to be *Kirāt*. Shafer has shown that linguistically speaking, the Sunuwar dialect closely resembles certain Rai dialects (Shafer 1953: 356-376). A large number of Sunuwars when living in the capital or in India, abandon their Sunuwar name for that of *Kirāt*, as many people believe that they belong to the polluted "occupational caste" of the goldsmiths (*Sunār*) (see: Macdonald 1970: 146 n. 23)

¹⁵. According to Linton, "a nativist movement is any conscious organized attempt on the part of a society's members, to revive or perpetuate selected aspects of its culture" (Linton 1943: 230). Although this definition has been convincingly criticized by Worsley (Worsley 1957:216) and by La Barre (La Barre 1972:42), it nevertheless remains the most adequate one to date.

¹⁶. Roughly 3,000 Jirels are found in 4 *panchayats*: Chhetarpa, Ibvankhu-Paldung, Jiri and Jungu-Yebo; and their highest concentration is in the Jiri and Sikri valleys. The Surels are reckoned to be a mixed sub-group arising from a cross between Sunuwar hunters and Sherpani. They speak a language closely related to Tibetan (see: Strahm & Maibaum 1971). I intend to publish shortly notes collected among Jirels.

Tharus (Srivastava 1958: 86-87); the *Jiji* Sherdukpens (Sharma 1961: 75-76); the *Mugou* Hrussos (Sinha 1962: 126-128); or the *Igu* Idu Mishmis (Baruah, 1960).

The *Naso* like the *Puimbo* embodied the old Sunuwar traditions: the one conducting *pidar* and offering sacrifice during rituals; the other calling on the deities to come down to the sanctuary and replenish themselves with the scent of the blood of victims to be sacrificed, before banishing them once again to the supernatural world as well as exorcising the sick possessed by evil spirits and practising divination. However this perfect balance between the two functions is gradually disappearing, and in the next few years the office of the *Naso* will have ceased to exist, and no doubt anyone will be able to perform sacrifice, if he so wishes. The *Puimbo* on the other hand, has a fine future ahead of him as long as there is penury of doctors, teachers and chemists in the region.

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